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5 February 1965

DCI BRIEFING
FOR THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

BRITISH GUIANA

- I. A coalition government under Premier Forbes Burnham apparently has slim chances for meaningful progress soon toward political stability, racial peace, and economic improvement.
 - A. Pro-Communist Cheddi Jagan's regime was ousted because his People's Progressive Party (PPP) failed to win a majority of votes in the 7 December election, which was run under the proportional representation system.
 1. The PPP captured a plurality, but its two major opponents together won about 53 percent of the votes and agreed to form a government.
 2. Their coalition is shaky, however. Personality or other differences could cause it to founder. It is made up of Burnham's People's National Congress (PNC--largely Negro and moderately socialist) and Peter D'Aguiar's United

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Force (UF--mostly wealthy whites and politically conservative).

3. Since the election, though, Burnham and D'Aguiar--who is finance minister in the new government--have gotten along reasonably well. Their 29 to 24 majority over Jagan's Progressive Party in the 53-seat legislature appears to be a fairly solid margin.

B. We know Jagan will be doing everything possible to wreck the new government, but his strategy probably has not yet been fully developed.

1. Jagan's party, now is developing a "passive resistance" campaign, to include demonstrations, economic boycotts, civil disobedience, and refusal to pay land rents. Jagan also reportedly intends to work in both the legislature and the labor field to split the coalition and gain greater popular support.
2. Jagan may seek the presidency of the Progressive Party - dominated Guiana Agricultural Workers' Union as one tactic

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to sharpen the struggle against the Burnham regime.

II. Although the first weeks of the new government have been relatively trouble-free, any of several thorny problems could end the honeymoon soon.

- A. Racial distrust and fear underlie all other problems. Despite Burnham's early moves toward moderation, the pro-Jagan East Indians probably remain terrified of him and Negroes in general. Their fears must have been magnified when several known Negro racists were appointed to high positions in the new government. In this atmosphere, further racial violence seems probable.
- B. A serious economic problem exists while markets are sought for about 52,000 tons of Guianese rice this year. Burnham says he would prefer not to sell to Cuba as Jagan did, but Guianese warehouses are bulging and coffers are empty, so buyers must be found soon.
- C. Burnham is expected to press the British to grant independence this year, but London so far has said that the Negroes and East

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Indians must first demonstrate that they can
get along with each other without violence.

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